California Environmental Protection Agency
State Water Resources Control Board

Division of Drinking Water

DARRIN POLHEMUS
Deputy Director CEA, Level B

EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
Governor

FACT SHEET - MAY 2017

NOTICE OF OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT – PERMIT FOR THE CITYOF EL MONTE'S ARDEN DRIVE TREATMENT SYSTEM

- *This document contains important information about your drinking water. Translate it, or speak with someone who understands it.*
- *Español: Este Documento contiene información muy importante sobre su agua de beber. Tradúzcalo ó hable con alguien que lo entienda bien.*

Documents related to the issuance of a drinking water supply permit amendment to the City of El Monte are available for review and public comment.

The California Environmental Protection Agency State Water Resources Control Board Division of Drinking Water (DDW) is reviewing certain documents (listed on page 6 of this notice) to allow the City to serve drinking water produced by three wells (Well 14, Well 15, and Well 16) and treated at the Arden Drive Treatment System to remove volatile organic chemicals (VOCs). The City is a public water agency that serves drinking water to approximately 3,500 households and businesses within its City limits, and has made these documents available for public review.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD
June 30 to July 31, 2017
Documents relevant to this project are available for review and public comment at the locations listed on page 6. DDW will make a final decision after all public comments have been reviewed and considered. Please submit written comments to the DDW on the attached comment form by mail or e-mail on or before 5:00 pm on July 31, 2017. Comments can also be submitted at the public hearing on July 13, 2017.

PUBLIC HEARING
July 13, 7-9 pm
Grace Black Auditorium
3130 Tyler Avenue
El Monte, CA 91731
For individuals with disabilities, DDW will provide assistive services such as sign language interpretation, real-time captioning, notetakers, reading or writing assistance, training/meeting materials in Braille, large print, audio cassette, or computer disk. To obtain these services or copies in one of these other formats, please contact Gail Tsoi-A-Sue of the DDW within one week prior to the public hearing:

Gail Tsoi-A-Sue, DDW
500 N. Central Ave., Suite 500
Glendale, CA 91203
Phone No. (818) 551-2004; California Relay Service TTY 711
Email: Gail.Tsoi-A-Sue@waterboards.ca.gov

For additional details regarding the public hearing, please see page 5.

Project Background

Wells 14, 15, and 16 and the Arden Drive Treatment System were constructed and funded by the East Side Performing Settling Defendants (ESPSDs) under an agreement with the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) to address impacts to the El Monte Operable Unit (EMOU) Southern Deep Zone drinking water aquifer by VOCs [mostly trichloroethene (TCE) and tetrachloroethene (PCE)]. Based on an agreement between the City and the ESPSDs, the City will take over operation and maintenance of Wells 14, 15, and 16 and the Arden Drive Treatment System and incorporate them into its drinking water system. DDW must issue a permit amendment to the City before this water may be served to the public. Due to the presence of VOCs in the EMOU, DDW has classified these wells as "Extremely Impaired Sources" and is following a special permitting process, which includes a public comment period and a public hearing.

What is trichloroethene?

Trichloroethene (TCE) is a VOC that is a clear, colorless liquid with a sweet odor. It evaporates quickly. TCE is used as a solvent for metals degreasing, manufacturing refrigerant chemicals, and as a spotting agent in dry cleaning facilities. TCE is carcinogenic to humans by all routes of exposure. Single (acute) or short-term exposure can potentially affect the developing fetus. High acute concentrations of TCE vapors can irritate the respiratory system and skin and induce central nervous system effects such as light-headedness, drowsiness, and headaches. Repeated (chronic) or prolonged exposure to TCE has been associated with impacts to the liver, kidneys, immune system, and central nervous system. TCE is a regulated drinking water contaminant in California, with a maximum contaminant level (MCL) of 5 micrograms per liter (µg/L, or parts per billion). Recent sampling results show TCE levels ranging from 9.8 to 23 µg/L in Wells 14, 15, and 16 and an overall blended pre-treatment concentration of 10 to 13 µg/L.

What is tetrachloroethene?

Tetrachloroethene (PCE) is widely used for dry-cleaning fabrics and metal degreasing operations. USEPA has classified PCE as likely to be carcinogenic to humans. Effects resulting from acute (short term) high-level inhalation exposure of humans to PCE include irritation of the upper respiratory tract and eyes, kidney dysfunction, and neurological effects such as reversible mood and behavioral changes, impairment of coordination, dizziness, headache, sleepiness, and unconsciousness. The primary effects from chronic (long term) inhalation exposure are neurological, including impaired cognitive and motor neurobehavioral performance. PCE exposure may also cause adverse effects in the kidney, liver, immune system and hematologic system, and on development and reproduction. Studies of people exposed in the workplace have found associations with several types of cancer including bladder cancer, non-Hodgkin lymphoma, and multiple myeloma. PCE is a regulated drinking water contaminant in California, with a MCL of 5 µg/L. Recent sampling results show PCE levels ranging from 4.6 to 12 µg/L in Wells 14, 15, and 16 and an overall blended pre-treatment concentration of 4.7 to 7.9 µg/L.

What is an "extremely impaired source"?

Under the DDW's Policy Memo 97-005, an extremely impaired source of groundwater meets one or more of the following criteria:

- Source exceeds 10 times a Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) or notification level (NL) based on chronic health effects;
- Source exceeds 3 times an MCL or NL based on acute health effects;
- Source is extremely threatened with contamination due to proximity to known contaminating activities;
- Source contains a mixture of contaminants of health concern; and
- The project is designed to intercept known contaminants of health concern.

Because Wells 14, 15, and 16 were: 1) designed to intercept known contaminants, as required by USEPA; 2) contain a mixture of contaminants of health concern; and 3) are potentially threated with contamination, they have been classified as extremely impaired sources.

Why is an "extremely impaired source" being used for drinking water?

The best quality sources available should always be used for drinking water. However, when properly and reliably treated, extremely impaired sources of water can be a valuable resource. Treatment of Wells 14, 15, and 16 will help clean up groundwater contamination in the EMOU and protect other nearby drinking water wells. Additionally, use of these local wells provide a new supply source for the City that is resistant to seasonal weather conditions. Since the City's Water Department relies solely on groundwater within San Gabriel Basin, redundant supply sources are beneficial in managing potential risks associated with water quality or mechanical issues with existing supply wells. This project also provides additional facilities for groundwater extraction in the event the City needs to lease or purchase additional water rights in the future to cope with sustained drought conditions and for long-term sustainability as the City meets growing demand.

What is the permitting process for "extremely impaired sources"?

Drinking water projects involving extremely impaired sources require intensive assessment by the DDW. Before a permit can be issued, the DDW must evaluate the following six elements:

- Source water assessment
- Full characterization of raw water quality
- Source protection measures
- Assessment of monitoring and treatment
- Assessment of human health risks
- Identification of alternatives.

The evaluation for Wells 14, 15, and 16 and the Arden Drive Treatment System is called the *DDW Policy Memorandum 97-005 Documentation, El Monte Wells Nos. 14, 15, and 16 and Groundwater Treatment Facility* (or "97-005 Engineering Report"). The City has made this document available for public comment.

Once a project receives a permit from DDW, extensive ongoing monitoring and evaluation, and regular reporting of these findings to DDW, is required.

What are the proposed treatment processes for Wells 14, 15, and 16?

The City and the ESPSDs have chosen a liquid granular activated carbon (also known as LGAC) treatment process for the removal of VOCs. In the LGAC process, water passes through two 20,000-pound filter vessels filled with LGAC and the VOCs in the water are removed by

adhering to the carbon. This treatment process is considered a Best Available Technology by DDW, and has been reliably and successfully used to treat drinking water at many locations in Southern California, including several of the City's other wellhead treatment systems. Use of the LGAC process in the Arden Drive Treatment System will remove VOCs from the drinking water to meet Federal and State drinking water standards.

What if the proposed treatment process fails?

Several reliability and redundancy features have been incorporated into the Arden Drive Treatment System design to prevent failures. Two LGAC filter vessels will be in a "lead-lag" arrangement where water will first flow through the lead filter vessel (1st vessel) and then through the lag filter vessel (2nd vessel). This process increases reliability since the bulk of contaminants is removed in the 1st filter vessel, and the 2nd filter vessel provides redundancy in case the 1st filter vessel does not function properly. The treatment facility is equipped with various instrumentation and alarm features to notify system operators of any failure that may occur in the treatment process. The operational status of each unit can be monitored on site or remotely. Also, the City has experienced and competent operators to oversee operation and maintenance of the facility as well as to perform frequent monitoring and inspections.

What are the ESPSDs doing about groundwater contamination originating from source area facilities where historic releases occurred?

The Eastern El Monte source area of the EMOU consists of two groundwater VOC plumes: the Eastern Shallow Zone plume and the Southern Deep Zone plume. The Eastern Shallow Zone includes shallow groundwater beneath an industrial portion of El Monte, where past industrial activities resulted in VOC impacts to soil and groundwater. Several facilities in this area have or are undergoing soil remediation. The Eastern Shallow Zone groundwater plume is also hydraulically contained by the Eastern Shallow Zone remedy which is an extraction, treatment, and re-injection system. The Eastern Shallow Zone groundwater is not used as a source of drinking water. Since its operation began in 2015, the Eastern Shallow Zone remedy has removed approximately 24.4 pounds of VOCs from treatment of more than 31 million gallons of groundwater migrating from the Eastern El Monte source area. More information on the groundwater cleanup efforts within the EMOU is available on the following USEPA and California EPA websites:

1) https://yosemite.epa.gov/r9/sfund/r9sfdocw.nsf/vwsoalphabetic/San+Gabriel+Valley+(Area+1)+El+Monte,+South+El+Monte,+Whittier+Narrows?OpenDocument

2) http://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/profile_report.asp?global_id=60001337

How has the treatment system been tested?

To demonstrate that the Arden Drive Treatment System will be able to reduce VOC levels to below their respective MCLs, the ESPSDs (on behalf of the City) have performed extensive start-up testing from February 2015 to May 2017. All monitoring results show that the Arden Drive Treatment System will remove VOCs from the three contaminated wells to meet all Federal and State drinking water standards.

Is my tap water safe to drink?

Yes! The Arden Drive Treatment System has been carefully designed and evaluated to ensure that the water produced for drinking purposes does not contain any VOCs. In addition, the City conducts extensive testing of the water as required by DDW. The City prepares an annual water quality report summarizing the results of the mandated testing that is performed throughout the year. The annual report for 2016 is available at http://www.ci.el-monte.ca.us/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=Sv-A_LQmcks%3d&tabid=605 .

CEQA Compliance

In compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the ESPSDs prepared an Initial Study to determine whether this proposed project may have a significant effect on the environment. Several mitigation measures were included as part of the project design and noted in the Initial Study. These mitigation measures have been incorporated into the project design, construction, and operational requirements. With the incorporation of these mitigation measures, the Initial Study determined that the proposed project will have less than significant impacts on the environment.

As lead agencies under CEQA, the City and the San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority (WQA) prepared a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for this project. The document was distributed to the public and circulated through the State Clearinghouse (SCH# 2011121090) for a 35-day review period beginning on December 28, 2011 and ending on January 31, 2012. No written comments were received during the review period. The project was approved by the City and the WQA on February 28, 2012, and Notices of Determination (NOD) were filed through the Los Angeles County Clerk Office on March 1, 2012.

Next Steps

Public Comment Period

The public comment period runs from June 30, 2017 through July 31, 2017. At the close of the public comment period, DDW will review and consider all public comments before deciding whether to issue a permit amendment for Wells 14, 15, and 16 and the Arden Drive Treatment System. The Arden Drive Treatment System is expected to begin delivering water to the distribution system in early August 2017, after issuance of a permit amendment from DDW. The City will continue to conduct extensive monitoring of the water and will submit a monthly report to DDW for review.

Public Hearing

DDW will hold a public hearing to provide an opportunity for the public to make comments on the proposed decision to issue a permit amendment to the City. The public hearing will be on Wednesday, July 13, 2017 from 7:00-9:00 pm at:

Grace Black Auditorium
3130 Tyler Avenue
El Monte, CA 91731

Public Hearing Agenda

The public hearing agenda will be as follows:

1. Introduction from the Hearing Officer (7:00-7:10 pm)
2. DDW Presentation on the Permit Evaluation of the City's Arden Drive Treatment System (7:10-7:30 pm)
3. Public Comments on City's Arden Drive Treatment System (7:30-9:00 pm)
4. Hearing Closed (9:00 pm)

All times indicated and the order of business are approximate and subject to change.

Where to Find the Documents

The City will make the 97-005 Engineering Report, DDW Project Evaluation and Assessment Summary, Arden Drive Treatment System Start-Up Report, and this Fact Sheet available for review online starting June 30 at http://www.ci.el-monte.ca.us/Home.aspx and at the following locations:

El Monte City Clerk's Counter
City Hall East
11333 Valley Boulevard
El Monte, CA. 91731-3293

(626) 580-2016

Hours:
Mon – Thu: 8:00am –5:30pm

City of El Monte Engineering Counter
City Hall West
11333 Valley Boulevard
El Monte, CA. 91731-3293

(626) 580-2090

Hours:
Mon – Thu: 8:00am –5:30pm

Whom To Contact For Information

If you have any questions about the project, please contact:

Sutida Bergquist
DDW District Engineer
(818) 551-2004
Sutida.Bergquist@waterboards.ca.gov

Elaine Jeng
Public Works Director
(626) 580-2001
engineering@elmonteca.gov

- Notice to the hearing impaired: You can obtain additional information by using the California State Relay Service 711 (TDD) to contact Gail Tsoi-A-Sue at (818) 551-2004 or by e-mailing Gail.Tsoi-A-Sue@waterboards.ca.gov .

- For accessibility information and to request reasonable accommodation at the public hearing, please call or e-mail Gail.Tsoi-A-Sue@waterboards.ca.gov at least one week in advance of the hearing.

COMMENT FORM AND MAILING COUPON

City of El Monte Arden Drive Treatment System

If you use this form to send us your comments, please include your name and address. All written comments must be received before 5pm on July 31, 2017.

Please send this form to:

Sutida.Bergquist@waterboards.ca.govor
Sutida Bergquist, District Engineer
SWRCB-DDW
500 N. Central Ave., Suite 500
Glendale, CA 91203

E-mail address: _____

Name:_____

Address:_____

Affiliation (if any):_____

Phone number (optional): _____

Comments: (If you need more space, please feel free to use another sheet of paper)

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